



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101-3140

OFFICE OF
ECOSYSTEMS, TRIBAL AND
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

May 24, 2012

Carey Case
12 North Nordic Drive
P.O. Box 1328
Petersburg, Alaska 99833-1328

Re: EPA comments on the USFS Tonka Timber Sale FEIS and ROD, Kupreanof Island, Petersburg Ranger District, Tongass National Forest, EPA Project #09-005-AFS.

Dear Mrs. Case:

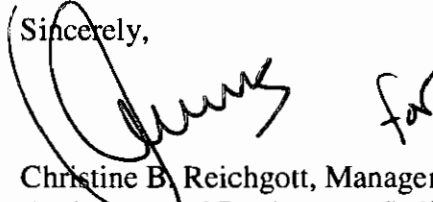
We have reviewed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and (Record of Decision) for the Tonka Timber Sale in the Petersburg Ranger District. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments to your agency in accordance with our responsibilities under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and the National Environmental Policy Act.

We believe that the Selected Alternative (Alternative 4) strikes a satisfactory balance between the economic needs of small and larger timber companies while minimizing impacts to the watersheds and natural resources within the designated harvest areas. We appreciate the extensive communication and coordination between the various stakeholders, including potentially affected and interested tribal governments, as well as local residents and area users. It is apparent that stakeholder input has helped guide the development of alternatives and identification of Alternative 4 as the Selected Alternative.

We do continue to have concerns regarding potential impacts to habitat connectivity and to water quality due to increased turbidity from road construction and harvest activities. We believe, however, that implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, including the best management practices and mixed management strategies outlined in the FEIS and ROD, will help to minimize these impacts. We also believe that use of the existing marine access facility (MAF), the Tonka MAF, with minor expansion for sorting, as well as existing roads, will further avoid unnecessary impacts, particularly to water quality. Finally, we recognize the Forest Service's commitment in the ROD for the closure and/or decommissioning of roads associated with this project at the end of harvest activities and for avoidance of inventoried roadless areas.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the Tonka Timber Sale FEIS and ROD. Should you have any questions concerning our comments, please contact me at (206) 553-1601 or by electronic mail at reichgott.christine@epa.gov, or you may contact Jennifer Curtis of my staff in Anchorage at (907) 271-6324 or by electronic mail at curtis.jennfer@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine B. Reichgott", followed by the word "for" in a cursive script.

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
Environmental Review and Sediments Management Unit